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121725Z Jun 00

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ACTION PRM-01

INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	AID-00	CA-02	CIAE-00	DODE-00	WHA-00
	SRPP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	OIGO-02	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	VO-03	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/015W	

-----61E1AE 121733Z /49

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6297
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE
COMMISSIONER USINS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 003160

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PRM A/S TAFT, PRM/A, PRM/AAA, AF/S, AF/PD,
WHA/CCA

NAIROBI FOR REFCOORD AND INS

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ROME FOR INS

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/10
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE REPORTEDLY WANTS CUBANS DOCTORS
RELEASED TO ANOTHER COUNTRY FOR PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT

REF: HARARE 3113

CLASSIFIED BY CONSUL THERESA A. HEBRON FOR REASONS 1.5
B/D.

1. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUESTED MESSAGE; PLEASE SEE
PARAGRAPH 8.

2. (C) SUMMARY: UNHCR OFFICIALS ADU AND SALOMONS
CONTINUED IN THEIR QUEST TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE
CUBAN DOCTORS JUNE 12, AT ONE POINT TELLING THE INS
OFFICER TO LEAVE THEM TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY. THEY HAD
NO OBJECTION TO EMBOFFS SEEING THE CUBANS BUT SAID THEY
WOULD NOT HELP THEM GAIN ACCESS. AT THE SAME TIME
SALOMONS PROBED FOR PROPRIETARY INFORMATION ON WHAT THE
DOCTORS TOLD INS OFFICER VARSANI ABOUT THEIR REFOULEMENT
ORDEAL. THE UNHCR OFFICIALS TOLD US THAT THE DECISION TO
RELEASE THE CUBANS NOW RESTED WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE, AND
THAT THE ZIMBABWEANS WERE ASKING THAT THE CUBAN
DEFECTORS BE RESETTLED IN A COUNTRY OTHER THAN THE
UNITED STATES, AS HAD BEEN THE PRACTICE IN SUCH CASES IN
THE PAST. REGIONAL UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE BAJULAIYE MAY
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COME TO HARARE TO TAKE OVER THE CASE, BUT DOWNPLAYS HIS
CHANCES OF ACHIEVING SUCCESS. MEANWHILE, SENIOR
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONTINUED TO OUCK THE AMBASSAOR'S
ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT THEM, OR FEIGNEO IGNORANCE OF THE
MERITS OF THE CASE WHEN REACHED. IF WE SEE NO PROGRESS
IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS, POST ASKS THAT THE SECRETARY
REQUEST UNHCR HEAD OGATA TO INTERVENE WITH PRESIDENT
MUGABE TO SECURE THE CUBANS' RELEASE. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) ON JUNE 12 UNHCR REPRESENTATIVES ADU AND SALOMONS
ADVISED INS OFFICER SANJEETA VARSANI THAT HER PRESENCE
WOULD BE AN IMPEDIMENT TO ANY MEETINGS HELD WITH GOZ
OFFICIALS CONCERNING THE CUBANS AND WOULD HINDER UNHCR'S
IMPARTIALITY. SALOMONS, HOWEVER, ASKED VARSANI TO SHARE
INS INTERVIEW NOTES FROM THE JUNE 9 REFUGEE INTERVIEW
THAT SHE CONDUCTED WITH THE CUBANS, AS THIS INFORMATION
WOULD BE HELPFUL TO UNHCR IN THE MEETINGS WITH THE GOZ
OFFICIALS. SALOMONS ALSO STATED THAT HE SPECIFICALLY
WANTED INFORMATION REGARDING WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CUBANS
AFTER THEY WERE ABDUCTED FROM THE TEACHER'S HOME ON JUNE
2 AND WHAT SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS DID OR SAID WHEN THE

CUBANS ARRIVED IN JOHANNESBURG. SALOMONS INDICATED THAT IF UNHCR COULD ESTABLISH THAT SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS ASSISTED THE GOZ IN THE ATTEMPTED REFOULEMENT OF THE CUBANS, THEN UNHCR STOOD A BETTER CHANCE AT SECURING THE CUBANS' RELEASE INTO THEIR CUSTODY TODAY JUNE 12. VARSANI DEMURRED AND SAID THAT SHE COULD NOT SHARE ANY INFORMATION WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF HER INS SUPERIORS. SALOMONS WENT ON TO STATE THAT THE PROCESS OF GETTING THE CUBANS RELEASED MAY TAKE SEVERAL DAYS, AS THE FINAL DECISION RESTED WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE. HE ALSO ADDED

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THAT IN THE PAST, WHEN HIGH PROFILE CUBANS DEFECT, CUBA TRIES TO SAVE FACE BY HAVING THEM RESETTLED IN ANY COUNTRY EXCEPT THE UNITED STATES.

14. (C) CONSUL RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM FORWARD MADZIYA (STRICTLY PROTECT), THE TEACHER WITH WHOM THE CUBANS HAD BEEN STAYING AFTER THEY REQUESTED ASYLUM. VARSANI WENT TO VISIT MADZIYA AT THE SCHOOL WHERE HE TEACHES IN GLEN NORAH, A HIGH-DENSITY AREA OUTSIDE OF HARARE. AFTER CONFIRMING THAT VARSANI HAD THE CUBANS' BEST INTERESTS IN MIND AND THAT SHE KNEW WHERE CORDOVA HAD HIDDEN THEIR PASSPORTS, MADZIYA TOOK VARSANI TO HIS HOME AND HANDED OVER THEIR PASSPORTS, TELEPHONE DIARIES, AND OTHER PERSONAL DOCUMENTS.

15. (C) ADU AND SALOMONS CONTINUE TO ARGUE THAT THE USG SHOULD KEEP ITS DISTANCE FROM THE CASE AND ALLOW THE CUBANS TO BE RESETTLED IN SOME OTHER COUNTRY, AS A "FACE-SAVING MEASURE" FOR THE GOZ. SALOMONS ALSO TOLD VARSANI THAT IF SHE AND CONSUL WISHED TO VISIT THE CUBANS, THAT PERMISSION WOULD HAVE TO BE SECURED WITHOUT UNHCR ASSISTANCE. JAMES MCANULTY, POLITICAL REFUGEE COORDINATOR AMEMBASSY NAIROBI, SAID THAT PREETA LAW OF

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INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	AID-00	CA-02	CIAE-00	DODE-00	WHA-00
	SRPP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	OIGO-02	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 003160

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THE UNHCR REGIONAL SERVICES CENTER NAIROBI ALSO MENTIONED THE GOZ'S OSTENSIBLE DESIRE TO HAVE THE CUBANS RESETTLED ANYWHERE BUT IN THE U.S. MCANULTY THOUGHT THAT ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE IMPASSE WOULD BE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE CUBANS WOULD GO TO KENYA, WHILE GLOSSING OVER THE FACT THAT THEY WOULD ALSO TRAVEL ONWARD FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THE U.S. HOWEVER, THIS MAY BE TOO TRANSPARENT A RUSE FOR THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT, AS WORD OF ONWARD PROCESSING HAS ALREADY HIT THE PRESS IN THE STATES.

16. (C) OLUSEYI BAJULAIYE, UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, TOLO LUSAKA DCM WHITEHEAD JUNE 12 THAT HE MAY COME TO HARARE TO SORT THE PROBLEM OUT HIMSELF. BAJULAIYE REITERATED THAT THE CASE WAS ON MUGABE'S DESK FOR DECISION. ALTHOUGH A SKILLED DIPLOMAT, BAJULAIYE THINKS HE IS CURRENTLY OUT OF FAVOR WITH THE GOV, BECAUSE OF STATEMENTS HE MADE ABOUT POSSIBLE REFUGEE INFLUXES FROM ZIMBABWE DUE TO THE LAND CRISIS.

17. (C) MEANWHILE, AMBASSADOR MCDONALD SPOKE WITH THE INFLUENTIAL SECRETARY OF THE CABINET, CHARLES UTETE, WHO
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WAS CORDIAL ENOUGH BUT PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THE MERITS OF THE CASE. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO ATTEMPTED TO SPEAK WITH HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER DUMISO DABENGWA AND OTHER SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, ALL OF WHOM PROVED UNAVAILABLE.

18. (C) ACTION REQUESTED: IF THE CUBAN DOCTORS ARE NOT RELEASED WITHIN THE NEXT 48 HOURS POST RECOMMENDS THAT THE SECRETARY PLACE A CALL TO UNHCR HEAD OGATA TO REQUEST THAT OGATA SPEAK WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE TO SECURE THE DOCTORS' FREEDOM AND TRANSFER OF CUSTODY TO UNHCR.

MCDONALD

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